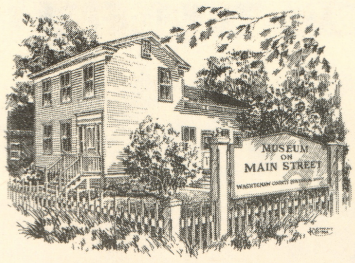
SEPTEMBER 2008

# IMPRESSIONS

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER • FOUNDED 1857




**Officers**

Richard L. Galant, PhD
President

Ralph P. Beebe
Vice-President

Judith M. Chrisman
Recording Secretary
Immediate Past President

Pauline V. Walters
Corresponding Secretary

Leslie L. Loomans
Treasurer

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Ann DeFreytas
Tom Freeman
Susan Kosky
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Cynthia Yao

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Mary Florida
Wayne Florida
Dean Greb
Donald Cameron Smith, MD

**Advisors**

Ina Hanel-Gerdenich
David LaMoreaux
Thomas F. Mich, PhD
Louisa Pieper

***The Washtenaw County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization.***

**Information**

Published Seven Times A Year
From September-May.

Museum On Main Street
500 N. Main Street at Beakes Street
Post Office Box 3336
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336

Phone: 734.662.9092
Email: wchs-500@ameritech.net
Web Site:
www.washtenawhistory.org

Annual dues: January-December individual, $15; couple/family $25; student or senior (60+) $10; senior couple $19; business/association $50; patron $100.

RICHARD L. GALANT, PhD

## President's Letter

The May 2008 Annual Meeting was held at the Rentschler Farm Barn. Agnes Dikeman told the assembled group about the Saline Area Historical Society. After the potluck supper, elections were held and Leslie L. Loomans was elected treasurer and Patty Creal was elected as a board member until 2011 replacing Dean Greb who became a Director-at-Large. Joanne Nesbit was elected to fill Les Loomans' position for the Director term ending 2010. We are pleased that Patty has chosen to remain a board member after having devoted more than 15 years as treasurer.

Directors, Susan Nenadic, Susan Wineberg and Cynthia Yao, whose terms expired in 2008, were re-elected to serve until 2011. Dean Greb will serve as a director-at-Large. Additionally, Wayne and Mary Florida were appointed Directors-at-Large.

A committee worked with Bidlack Creative Group and has devised a splendid four-color brochure which you will receive in the fundraising mailing in the near future. We are very pleased with the brochure.

## *Come and experience a story...*

*...either from your childhood or from earlier times. We have several exhibits a year on a variety of topics including kitchens, old bridges, politics, weddings, 150 Years of the YMCA, one-room schools, 100 years of Psychiatry at the University of Michigan, Christmas toys of today and yesterday, and much much more.*

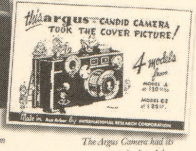
*Real Rosie Riveters building a B-24 at Willow Run during World War II.*

*The Salk polio vaccine was announced in Ann Arbor on April 12, 1955.*

*Ann Arbor's very own brand of lard from Steeb Bros.*

*Playwright Arthur Miller retained a close association with the University of Michigan and Ann Arbor throughout his life.*

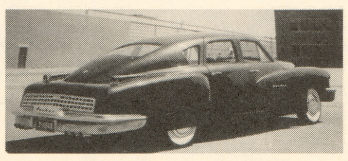
*Hoover Ball Bearing Paper Weight*




*The Argus Camera had its roots in Ann Arbor.*

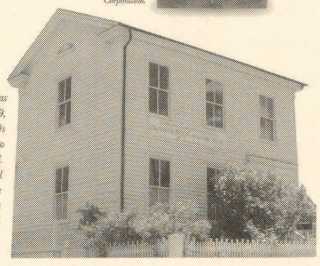
*Inexpensive Kadette Radios were manufactured for the masses in Ann Arbor by the International Radio Corporation.*

*The famous 1948 Tucker Sedan produced in Chicago, but conceived in Ypsilanti.*



The Museum on Main Street
WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*The Museum on Main Street has been telling these stories since 1999, when we opened in a restored 1830s house which was moved in 1990 to prevent it from being demolished. The Washtenaw County Historical Society, which operates the Museum, has been collecting "things" and stories for much longer -150 years as of 2007.*



**JUNE 2007 - MAY 2008**

# Resolutions

**At the 2008 Annual Meeting of the Washtenaw County Historical Society the following resolutions were adopted:**

**WHEREAS:**

(*person / company*) contributed / donated / served the Washtenaw County Historical Society

**BE IT RESOLVED:**

That we express our sincere thanks and the members of the Society do thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,
Richard L. Galant, *President*

**Storage of WCHS Artifacts:** ..... Sweepster, Inc., Philip Jenkins and Donald Socks

**Programs:** ..... Ralph Beebe, chair and WCHS vice president

Sept. 2007: *"Another Ann Arbor – African Americans"* Carol Gibson at David Byrd Center, 3216 Lohr Rd, 48108

Oct. 2007: *"Un-Built Buildings at the University of Michigan"* Fred Mayer at University Commons, Asa Gray Drive, 48105

Nov. 2007: *"Art in Washtenaw Cemeteries"* Wystan Stevens at Ypsilanti District Library on Whitaker Rd., 48197

Feb. 2008 *"Ann Arbor Buildings and Architecture"* Anita Toews at Cobblestone Farm Barn, 48108

Mar. 2008 *"Working Women's History Prior to 1918* Susan Nenadic at Ann Arbor District Library, 48104

Apr. 2008 *"The Restoration of St Helena Lighthouse with Scout Troop 4"* Dick Moehl at Glacier Hills Community – Hanson Room, 48105

May 2008 WCHS's Annual Meeting at Rentschler Farm Barn, 48176

**Thanks to our 2008 Annual Meeting Host:** Saline Area Historical Society

**Mailings:** ..... Betty Doman, Ralph Beebe

**Garden:** ..... Sue Kosky, Patty Creal, Ann DeFreytas, Judy Chrisman, Lillian Ferguson

**Mowing lawn at MoMS:** ..... Mary and Wayne Florida

**Lawn sprinkling system:** ..... Dick Stein and Genastar Co.

**Hosting Web:** ..... **www.WashtenawHistory.org** C. Edward Wall and Pierian Press

**Webmaster:** ..... Jan E. Tripp

**Exhibits:**

*Sesquicentennial Exhibit* ..... Sesquicentennial Committee
*Christmas Lights, Ornaments & Trees* ..... Alice Cerniglia & crew
*Kitchens – 1830 to 1950* ..... Alice Cerniglia & crew

**Signage for exhibits:** ..... Grafaktri, Inc.

**Docents**:
Rosemarion Blake
Judy Chrisman
Ralph Beebe
Susan Wineberg
Ann DeFreytas
Jay Snyder
Tom Freeman
Dean & Linda Greb
Sue Kosky
Dick Galant
Pauline Walters
Susan Nenadic

***Impressions* Design/Layout**:
Deb Royal

***Impressions* Editor:**
Patti Smith

**Sesquicentennial Committee**:
Sue Kosky, *chair*
Ralph Beebe
Tom Freeman
Cynthia Yao
Susan Nenadic
Ann DeFreytas
Patti Creal
Susan Wineberg
Patricia Pooley
Trudy Bulkley
Karen K. O'Neal
Alice Cerniglia
Pauline Walters
Jay Snyder
Rosemarion Blake
Dick Galant
Judy Chrisman

# Thank You!

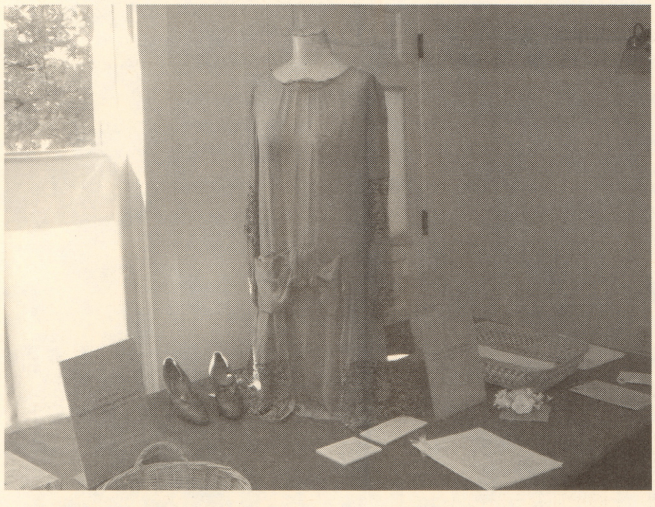
**to *The Ann Arbor News* for donating seven months' worth of paper**

THE SUMMER EXHIBITION:

# Tying the Knot - Weddings

**The gown on the left was worn by Eunice Fitea, the bride of Fielding H. Yost. They were married in 1905 and honeymooned in Cuba. The two piece dress in the center was worn by Lois Burnett Hiscock in 1883 and the gown in the far corner was that of Charlotte Haas Sallade – 1945.**

**The bridal gown of Ella Travis, bride of Junius Beal, 1898. The gown in the center was her going away dress. The tandem bicycle in the foreground was a wedding gift from Junius to his bride.**



**In 1925, Dama Godfrey married Cecil Creal in the 114 East Kingsley Godfrey home. Visitors to the exhibition could stand beside the gown and view the Godfrey home where the marriage took place.**

**The gown at the top of the stairs was worn by Martha Warner, bride of James Campbell, in 1905.**

The wedding exhibition has closed. The gowns have been packed away awaiting another event. The cake and cake toppers on loan have been returned. Even the bicycle-built-for-two has been relegated to its off-site storage. But memories and stories of weddings across the years remain.

Museum visitors were surprised that 19th century brides did not usually wear white and shocked that the average wedding today costs $30,000. They added to the list of movies featuring weddings, left their own wedding details for future generations and voted for their favorite dress in the exhibition. While every dress received at least one vote, the ivory lace gown worn by the bride of Fielding H. Yost was the winner.

Two guests left a note in the ballot box saying they "had a better time here than at the Manhattan Transfer or at the Purple Rose." Thank you ladies. Many thanks to all who helped us "tie the knot" successfully.

# The Ann Arbor YMCA from 1858 to 2008: Serving the Ann Arbor Community for 150 Years

The Ann Arbor YMCA will celebrate 150 years of community service with an historical display at the Washtenaw County Historical Society's Museum on Main Street starting Wednesday, September 17, 2008. The YMCA's collection of photographs, documents, memorabilia and video interviews with local citizens traces the start of the first YMCA by University of Michigan students to the Ann Arbor YMCA of today.

One of the oldest organizations in Ann Arbor, the YMCA initially served as a place where male students could meet to socialize and hold Bible studies. Over time, the YMCA merged with the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) to form an organization where men, women and children of all ages, races, incomes and religions enjoy a variety of recreational programs.

## The YMCA exhibit is organized into three distinct areas:

***History and Mission of the YMCA in Ann Arbor*** depicts the founding of the YMCA by university students in 1858 and opening of Lane Hall by the UM-YMCA in 1917. Lane Hall was funded in part by John D. Rockefeller and named for Judge Victor Lane (1852-1930), a Circuit Court judge in Adrian Michigan from 1888-1897 and University of Michigan law professor from 1897-1928. Lane served as president of the University YMCA for many years.

**Lane Hall, undated**

In 1892, the City YMCA was chartered and eventually housed in a new building on North Fourth Avenue from 1904-1959. The exhibit also shows photographs and original documents for the YWCA, which was founded in Ann Arbor in 1894 and eventually housed in the Christian Mack residence on South Fourth Avenue from 1913 to 1959. The YWCA provided rooms, an employment bureau and classes for young women.

Wendell Lyons (1916-1986), Executive Secretary of the YMCA from 1951-1963, was the architect of the movement to merge the Ann Arbor YMCA and YWCA . During the early 1950s the boards of directors of both the YMCA and YWCA recognized the need for new buildings for their respective organizations, and they decided to legally merge into one organization in 1956. The idea of combining these boards was innovative for its time and resulted in the new merged organization being disaffiliated with the National Board of the YWCA.

James (1886-1957) and Verna (1900-1978) Parker were instrumental in the history of the merger of the YM and YWCA in the 1950s. Prior to the YM-YWCA merger, James was Chairman of the Building Committee. He headed the fundraising campaign in 1956 that raised over $1,000,000 within a seven-week period. James Parker did not live to see the new building become a reality; he died in 1957. Verna Parker served in many capacities as a board member of the YWCA. She was president of the board of the merged YM-YWCA from 1956-1959.

Known first as the YM-YWCA and later as the Ann Arbor Y, the new building opened in 1960. The YMCA on South Fifth Avenue was renovated four times and added onto twice between 1959 and 2005. The many transitions in this building were the result of attempts to accommodate social trends of the last 40 years, including an increased emphasis on families, fitness and organized activities.

**Milt Kemnitz (1911-2005), local artist, political activist and Ann Arbor YMCA member, painted and drew numerous scenes around Ann Arbor. His paintings, including *"Children of the YMCA" and ink drawings of the YMCA's class catalog covers from the late 1980s (1986 and 1988) will be on display.***

**Hattie A.T. Crippen** (1863-1955) was the daughter of Methodist Minister John W. Crippen (1833-1909) and Esther Crippen (1838-1916). Both Hattie and her mother were charter members of the Ann Arbor chapter of the YWCU (later YWCA). They attended the first meeting of the YWCA in 1894, and Hattie became the first president of the Ann Arbor association shortly thereafter. It was a position that she held for five years. *"During the first years the activities consisted largely of evening classes in the three R's for those whose schooling had been curtailed by economic necessity, of social good times, and of homelike hours of worship on Sunday afternoons."* City directory listings from 1888-1892 show that Hattie was a teacher before the organization was formed; she continued to teach throughout her term at the YWCA. After her parents' death, Hattie continued to live in the family home on Ann Street, taking in boarders. She never married. Hattie died in Saline on December 26, 1955. She is buried alongside her parents at Forest Hill Cemetery in Ann Arbor. Hattie's notes for teaching English grammar and a lecture on the history of tea are among the items that will be on display at the exhibit.

***Spirit, Mind, Body: Programs at the YMCA*** displays memorabilia from the YMCA's sports and fitness programs, including basketball and volleyball items. Volleyball, which was invented at the Holyoke, Massachusetts YMCA in 1895 by instructor William Morgan, was a mix of basketball, tennis and handball, originally called "mintonette". The name "volleyball" came into use in 1896 during an exhibition at the International YMCA Training School in Springfield, Massachusetts, to describe how the ball went back and forth over the net. In 1922, YMCAs held their first national championship in the game. This championship became the U.S. Open in 1924, when non-YMCA teams also competed.

Viggo Nelson (1895-1971) introduced competitive volleyball to Ann Arbor. He was inducted into the Volleyball Hall of Fame in the late 1990s. Viggo served as YMCA General Secretary in Ann Arbor (1919-1931/1934/1936). He was also the Camp Birkett Boys Work Secretary in 1920 and Camp Director (1921-1922.)

**Camp Birkett, August 1943**

***Character Values and Youth Development: Summer Camps*** features displays from the Ann Arbor YMCA's summer camps, including Camp Birkett, Camp Takona and Camp Al-Gon-Quian.

*Camp Birkett* is the oldest organized camp in Washtenaw County. Thomas Birkett of Dexter deeded the property, which consists of 11 acres of woods and lake frontage on the east shores of Silver Lake, to the City YMCA in 1914. In 1920, the camp was gifted to the Ann Arbor YMCA, and from 1922 to 1933, the local Kiwanians upgraded the waterfront and built sleeping lodges, a handicraft cabin, a tennis court, and a sanitary system. Originally an all-boys camp, Birkett became a co-ed day camp after the merger of the YMCA and the YWCA in 1959.

*Camp Takona*, located in Grass Lake near Chelsea, was an all-girls camp owned by the YWCA. The camp first held six-week sessions for up to 40 girls ages 10-16 years old. Each summer the camp held an extra session to enable underprivileged children from the Family Welfare Bureau to take part in recreational and social activities. By the mid-1950s, the camp had both a residence program for girls ages 9-13 and a day camp program for younger girls ages 6-9. In 1972, the Ann Arbor Community Center purchased Camp Takona from the YM-YWCA.

*Camp Al-Gon-Quian*, located on Burt Lake in northern Lower Michigan, has been in operation since 1926. It began as an all-boys camp run by Herb Twining. The YMCA acquired Camp Al-Gon-Quian in 1968 from Herb Twining's family, and the camp became co-ed in 1969. The camp remains a "...second and never-forgotten home to many." Its 150 acres include wooded areas and shoreline for activities such as swimming, sailing, canoeing, horseback riding, archery, nature study, crafts, and sports.

***The Ann Arbor YMCA's 150th anniversary exhibit runs from Wednesday, September 17-Saturday, November 22, 2008.***

# Upcoming Events

### Dexter Area Historical Society and Museum

3443 Inverness, Dexter, MI 48130
(734) - 426-2512
eMail: ***dexmuseum@aol.com***

**Annual Holiday Bazaar: Saturday, December 6** from 9AM to 4PM

**Annual Christmas Sing: Friday, December 12** at 7 PM

### Saline Area Historical Society

**Wednesday, September 17 UNDERGROUND RAILROAD** with Carol Mull at the Saline Senior Center 7 p.m. Free. Everyone welcome.
eMail: SalineHistory@verizon.net
Web: www.SalineHistory.org

The Senior Center is on the back side of Saline Middle School on Maple Road in Saline. Green and white signs in the parking lot provide directions to the Senior Center door.

**Sunday, October 12 THE DARK SIDE OF SALINE'S OAKWOOD CEMETERY** with Bob Lane. Meet at 5 p.m. in Saline's Parking Lot 4 (behind Benny's Bakery) for a walk down W Henry Street to the cemetery. Free. 734 / 944-0442
eMail: SalineHistory@verizon.net
Web: www.SalineHistory.org

### Cobblestone Farm Association

2781 Packard Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48108
eMail: www.CobbleStoneFarm.org
734 / 994-2928

**Sunday, October 12**: noon to 4 P.M. **Fall Harvest with Halloween theme** a family event $7.00 per Family, $1.50 single and seniors

**Sunday, December 7**: noon to 4 P.M. **Remembrance of December Seventh** $7.00 per Family, $1.50 single and seniors

### Salem Area Historical Society

**Friday, September 19** — 7 PM — **SAHS Annual Barn Dance** at the Three Cedar Farm with Dance Caller and Pick 'N' Sticks. Admission is $5 per person or $15 per family

**Wednesday, October 22** — 7:30 PM — **"Restoration of Old Gravestones"** presentation by Michelle Bononi at the Jarvis-Stone School

### Pittsfield Historical Society

701 West Ellsworth, Ann Arbor, 48108
Info: 734 / 434-4047
mew_42strat@yahoo.com

**Sunday, September 14** — 2:00 to 4:00 PM
**Pittsfield Township Veterans' Memories**
Several veterans will attend and speak about their war experiences

**Sunday, October 12**
2:00 to 4:00 PM
**Leticia Byrd Oral History**

### Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County, MI

Education Center Auditorium
St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Campus
5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti, MI
1:30 P.M.
Free and Open to the Public
Visitors are Welcome

**Sunday, September 28, 2008**
**Bobbie Snow on Early Census Class-**panel on Virginia and West Virginia

**Sunday, October 26, 2008**
**Mary Griffes Old Style Handwriting Class**-Caroline Griffin Tracing Collateral lines

# Mystery Donation

Do you recognize these artifacts? They were found on the museum's back porch wrapped in black plastic bags. Call 734-662-9092 if you can identify the donor.

# Work Opportunity

Seeking a contract person to gather material for Washtenaw County Historical Society's seven monthly newsletters. For information call: 734.662.9092 or eMail: wchs-500@ameritech.net

# Antique Novy Family Carriage Donated

**Joshua Robert Jacobson, great-great grandson of Dr. F. N. Novy, *ca.* 1980.**

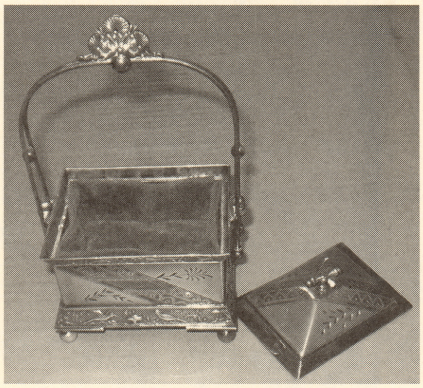
The Society has received several donations over the summer. Among them is a baby carriage purchased by Dr. Frederick G. Novy for his firstborn son Dr. Robert L. Novy in 1892. Dr. Frederick Novy was the chairman of the University of Michigan Department of Biology, founded in 1902, for more than three decades and then served as Dean of the Medical School from 1935-1937. Dr. Robert L. Novy graduated from the Medical School in 1927 and later became president of Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Michigan.

Information provided by Doranne Jacobson, great-granddaughter of Dr. Frederick Novy, indicates that "virtually everyone associated with the baby carriage has lived in Ann Arbor and graduated from the University of Michigan." The family babies have had their portraits taken in the carriage including her daughter, Dr. Laurie Jacobson who was the first sixth-generation graduate. The child in the adjacent photograph is Laurie Jacobson's brother, Joshua Robert Jacobson.

It has been in the family except for a brief time in 1965 when it was restored by Heidi Shultz, a friend of the family, in 1965 and used briefly for her son. She rebuilt a corner of the carriage and recovered the upholstery and umbrella. A date of 1892 was found on the bottom of the carriage. The patent date on the umbrella is June 17, 1884 and on the umbrella holder, April 1, 1881.

The Society thanks Dorothy Novy Wilson, Doranne Jacobson and Cameron Shultz for their generous donation of the carriage.

# Help Tell the Story!



## Bach Family Jewelry Box

This artifact came from the estate of Anna Botsford Bach. The family was known to exchange silver gifts for important events.

There are a thousand stories about the history of Washtenaw County at the Museum on Main Street. Do you have four hours to volunteer as a docent sharing this history with museum visitors? Join in the fun and excitement of greeting and meeting curious folks of all ages from across the country.

Contact: Susan Nenadic: slnenadic@gmail.com
or Joanne Nesbit: mjnesbit@umich.edu

These are examples of artifacts in the WCHS collection-each with a story to tell.

## World War I Souvenir

The pillow cover was donated by Betty and Harry Benford as part of a group of artifacts from the estate of her parents, Howard and Edith Smallman. Her father served in World War One and brought the souvenir to his wife.

MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET
A Museum Of County Life

**WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-3336

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Ann Arbor, MI
Permit No. 96

MEMBER 2008
NANCY KROHN
905 ROBIN RD
ANN ARBOR MI 48103-3008

**SUNDAY • 2 PM**
**SEPTEMBER 21, 2008**

**WCHS GENERAL MEETING**

**YMCA: 150 YEARS IN ANN ARBOR**

**PITTSFIELD DISTRICT LIBRARY**
**2359 OAK VALLEY DRIVE**
**48108**

**INFORMATION • 734.662-9092**
**www.WashtenawHistory.org**



# Make Note - Dates to Remember

## 2008-2009 General Meeting Schedule • 2:00 PM

Sun. Sep. 21 **YMCA – Serving the Ann Arbor Community for 150 Years**
*Cathi Duchon & Dan Maier / Pittsfield Dist Lib, 3259 Oak Valley 48108*

Sun. Oct. 19 **Fox Gravel Pit – Ancient Botany / Geology**
*John Russell / Washt Co Resource Ctr Library, Hogback Rd, 48104*

Sun. Nov. 16 **A History of the University of Michigan Medical School**
*Dr. David Bloom / Ann Arbor District Library, 343 S Fifth Av, 48104*

Sun. Feb. 15 **Archeology of 1015 Wall Street & Lower Town**
*Dr. Henry Wright / Exhibit Museum, 1109 Geddes Av, 48109*

Sun. Mar. 15 **Transportation History Collection**
*Kathleen Dow / Special Collections Library, 7th Floor Hatcher, 48109*

Sun. Apr. 19 **The Toledo War.** *Don Faber / McKune Memorial Library, 221 S Main, Chelsea, 48118*

# Mission Statement

*The purpose of the Washtenaw County Historical Society is to foster interest in and to elucidate the history of Washtenaw County from the time of the original inhabitants to the present. Its mission shall be to carry out the mandate as stated through the preservation and presentation of artifacts and information by exhibit, assembly, and publication. And to teach, especially our youth, the facts, value and the uses of Washtenaw County history through exhibits in museums and classrooms, classes, tours to historical places, and other educational activities.*